**DOCUMENT RESUME**

ED 172 052 CG 013 455

AUTHOR Olson, James M.; And Others
TITLE Attitude-Behavior Consistency: An Individual Difference Perspective.
INSTITUTION Princeton Univ., N.J.
SPONS AGENCY Canada Council, Ottawa (Ontario).
PUB DATE Aug 78
GRANT S-76-0344
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (Toronto, Ontario, Canada, August, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attitudes; Behavioral Science Research; *Behavior Patterns; Behavior Rating Scales; *Individual Psychology; *Religious Factors; *Self Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS *Self Monitoring Scale (Snyder)

ABSTRACT

The use of self-monitoring and self-reported variability in cross-situational behavior to identify persons most likely to manifest covariation between their attitudes and behaviors was investigated. In the first session, subjects (N=102) completed Snyder's Self-Monitoring Scale, assessed their religious attitudes and indicated the extent to which they varied from one situation to another in how religious they were. In the second session, approximately one month later, several measures of subjects' religious behaviors since the first session were obtained. Attitude-behavior correlations were computed within each of the four groups of subjects produced by a low-high self-monitoring x low-high variability classification scheme. Results indicated that only those subjects who were classified as "low" on both dimensions manifested consistently high attitude-behavior correlations. (Author)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED172052

# Attitude-Behavior Consistency: An Individual Difference Perspective

James M. Olson
University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada

Mark P. Zanna
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

and

Russell H. Fazio
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

James M. Olson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

The present research was supported by Canada Council Grant S76-0344 to the second author, and was conducted while the first author was supported by a Canada Council Doctoral Fellowship and while the third author was supported by an NSF Graduate Fellowship.

This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, August 1978.

CG013455

The relationship between attitudes and behaviors has received much attention from social scientists. The functional utility of the concept of attitude clearly depends upon the ability to demonstrate a direct influence of attitudes upon behavioral responses. However, research has typically found that this relationship is anything but substantial (see, for example, Deutscher, 1973; Wicker, 1969, 1971). Paralleling this critical assessment of the attitude-behavior relationship within social psychology has been a questioning by some personality researchers of the assumed relationship between measures of stable trait dispositions and behavior (e.g., Mischel, 1968, 1973; Vernon, 1964). These theorists have argued that trait measures are, in general, poor predictors of actual behavior, and that the situational specificity of behavior is the rule rather than the exception.

Two individual difference approaches which have attempted to resolve these parallel controversies may have implications for one another. The construct of self-monitoring (Snyder, 1974; Snyder & Monson, 1975) has been proposed as a trait dimension that moderates the attitude-behavior relationship. Those persons who guide their behavioral choices mainly on the basis of salient information from relevant inner dispositions (low self-monitors) have been shown (Snyder & Tanke, 1976) to manifest more covariation between their attitudes and behaviors than those who monitor their choices mainly on the basis of situational information (high self-monitors). From a different theoretical perspective, Bem and Allen (1974) have shown that individuals who identify themselves as behaving consistently on a particular trait dimension will in fact be more consistent cross-situationally than those who identify themselves as highly variable on that trait.

The Bem and Allen (1974) approach would seem to be directly applicable to the attitude-behavior relationship. It should be possible to ask individuals how

much they vary from one situation to another in their behavioral manifestations of a particular attitude. Their self-reported variability would then be expected to predict actual attitude-behavior consistency.

However, a question arises about the relationship between self-reports of variability in cross-situational behavior and the self-monitoring dimension. Would the concepts be psychologically equivalent? If not, what would the predictions of attitude-behavior consistency be from a classification scheme which took into account both constructs? These are clearly empirical questions, and it was the purpose of the present study to explore these issues.

If we assume that self-monitoring scores and self-reports of cross-situational variability in behavior are not entirely related constructs (although they have similar behavioral implications), then there would seem to be at least four plausible patterns of attitude-behavior covariation which could emerge from a combined classification scheme. Slide 1 presents the possible patterns.

---

Show Slide 1 Here

---

The first possible pattern (a) could be that <u>either</u> low self-monitoring <u>or</u> low self-reported variability in cross-situational behavior will produce attitude-behavior consistency. This pattern would suggest that being low on either dimension is all that is necessary for attitude-behavior consistency to be manifested, and that being low on both dimensions has no additional impact. The second possible pattern (b) could be that only those individuals who are both low self-monitors <u>and</u> who report that their cross-situational variability in behavior is low will manifest consistency. This pattern would suggest that both dimensions are necessary for identifying most accurately the subgroup of individuals who will behave in accordance with their attitudes. The third possible pattern (c) could be a "two

main effects" pattern, such that individuals who are low on only one dimension will manifest more attitude-behavior consistency than those who are high on both dimensions, and that those who are low on both dimensions will manifest the most consistency. This pattern would suggest that the two dimensions exert independent effects on attitude-behavior consistency. The final possible pattern that could emerge (d) would be a multiplicative interaction between the dimensions, such that individuals who are low on both dimensions will manifest even more attitude-behavior covariation than would be expected from a "two main effects" model. This pattern would suggest that while the two dimensions exert separate effects on attitude-behavior consistency, their combined effect is particularly powerful.

The present study was conducted to explore the relationship between these two constructs, and to examine the pattern of attitude-behavior correlations that emerges from a classification scheme which takes both into account. Attitudes toward religion were selected as the critical attitude domain, and self-reports of several behaviors that are related to religious attitudes were obtained.

## Method

### Subjects

One hundred and two introductory psychology students, 50 males and 52 females, participated in a two-session study. The subjects were recruited from the voluntary subject pool at the University of Waterloo, and received neither monetary rewards nor academic credit for their participation. For both sessions, which were separated by approximately one month, subjects participated in groups ranging in size from two to ten.

### Procedure

During the first session, subjects completed Snyder's (1972, 1974) Self-Monitoring Scale, and a questionnaire which assessed their attitudes towards various topics, including religion. The critical attitude statement was "To what

extent do you consider yourself to be favorable or unfavorable towards being religious?," with an eleven-point response scale ranging from "Extremely unfavorable" (-5) through "Neutral" (0) to "Extremely favorable" (+5). Subjects were also asked "How much do you vary from one situation to another in how religious you are?," with possible answers ranging from "Not at all" (0) to "Extremely" (6). This latter question measured, within the domain of religious behaviors, Bem and Allen's (1974) concept of cross-situational variability in behavior.

Approximately one month after participating in the first session, subjects returned for the second session, during which measures of some of their actual behaviors since the first session were obtained (subjects had not been forewarned that such measures would be taken). Subjects were asked "Since the last time you participated in this study, how many times did you: (1) become intoxicated on alcohol?, (2) attend a religious service?, (3) pray in private?, and (4) use illegal drugs?". The frequencies with which subjects performed these acts served as indices of their religion-related behaviors. The relevance of religious beliefs to alcohol consumption and illegal drug use has been documented by several researchers (e.g., Gergen, Gergen, & Morse, 1972; Strommen, Note 1).

Classification of subjects

Each subject was classified as either a high or low self-monitor, and as either a high or low variability subject. The former classification was performed by calculating the median self-monitoring score across all subjects, and dichotomizing the distribution at that point. The most equal split that could be made was by classifying subjects who scored between 0 and 11 on the Self-Monitoring Scale as low self-monitors, and subjects who scored between 12 and 25 as high self-monitors. Using this division point, 44 subjects were classified as low

self-monitors, and 58 as high self-monitors. The classification into high and low variability subjects was performed by calculating the median variability score at each score on the eleven-point attitude scale (as suggested by Bem & Allen, 1974), thereby removing the possible confounding of attitude extremity and variability. This procedure resulted in 52 participants being classified as low variability subjects, and 50 as high variability subjects.

The combined classification of subjects, taking into account both self-monitoring and variability, resulted in 24 subjects being classified as low on both dimensions, 30 as high on both dimensions, 20 as high variability/low self-monitors, and 28 as low variability/high self-monitors. The fact that there were a few more "low-low" and "high-high" subjects than "low-high" and "high-low" subjects reflected the fact that a small positive correlation existed between self-monitoring scores and the dichotimized variability scale, $r(100) = .19$, $p < .10$.

## Results and Discussion

The frequency distributions of the four religion-related behaviors were standardized, and, on the basis of the intercorrelations, two measures of religious behaviors were computed for each subject. The first measure was the sum of the subject's standardized scores for "attended religious services" and "prayed in private" (these frequency scores were significantly intercorrelated, $r(100) = .26$, $p < .01$). The second measure was the sum of the subject's standardized scores for "became intoxicated on alcohol" and "used illegal drugs" (these frequency scores also intercorrelated, $r(100) = .47$, $p < .001$).

The correlations between religious attitudes and each of these two measures of religious behaviors were computed within each of the four cells produced by the combined classification scheme. Slide 2 presents the overall, marginal, and

within-cell correlations for each measure.

---

Show Slide 2 Here

---

The overall positive correlation for the attended services/prayed measure reflects the fact that more favorable religious attitudes were associated with more attending services and praying. Although the overall correlation between religious attitudes and the alcohol/drugs measure was not reliably different from zero, its negative sign reflects the fact that the direction of the relationship was towards more favorable religious attitudes being associated with less alcohol and drug use. Overall, then, there was evidence for, at best, a modest relation between attitudes and behavior -- a finding that is entirely consistent with past research.

When the individual difference variables were taken into account one at a time, our expectations based on past research were supported. For both measures, low self-monitors manifested more attitude-behavior covariation than high self-monitors, and low variability subjects manifested more attitude-behavior covariation than high variability subjects. Although these marginal correlations did not differ reliably on the attended services/prayed measure, significant differences were obtained on the alcohol/drugs measure. Low self-monitors manifested significantly more covariation between their religious attitudes and their alcohol and drug consumption than did high self-monitors, $\underline{z} = 2.52$, $\underline{p} < .02$, and low variability subjects manifested greater consistency than high variability subjects, $\underline{z} = 2.44$, $\underline{p} < .02$. These results, then, tend to replicate those of Snyder and his colleagues, and extend those of Bem & Allen (1974) to the domain of attitudes.

However, the within-cell correlations show that these "main effects" were largely due to subjects who were "low" on <u>both</u> dimensions. These subjects were

the only group to manifest attitude-behavior correlations that were reliably different from zero. None of the other within-cell correlations differed reliably among themselves. Although the "low-low" cell did not differ reliably from any other cell on the attended services/prayed measure, "low-low" subjects tended to manifest reliably greater attitude-behavior covariation on the alcohol/drugs measure than subjects in any other cell. The contrasts were as follows: "low-low" versus "low variability/high self-monitoring," $\underline{z} = 1.64$, $p < .10$; "low-low" versus "high variability/low self-monitoring," $\underline{z} = 1.71$, $p < .10$; "low-low" versus "high-high," $\underline{z} = 3.12$, $p < .001$.

The patterns of correlations across the two measures of religious behaviors strongly suggest that self-monitoring and self-reported variability must both be taken into account if one is to identify most accurately those persons who will manifest the greatest attitude-behavior covariation. While subjects classified as "low" on a dimension manifested more attitude-behavior consistency than subjects classified as "high" on that dimension, the within-cell correlations from the combined classification scheme revealed that these "main effects" were primarily due to subjects who were "low" on <u>both</u> dimensions. Subjects who were low on one dimension and high on the other did not manifest greater attitude-behavior covariation than subjects who were high on both dimensions.

Thus, of the possible patterns presented in Slide 1, pattern (b) would seem to be most consistent with the obtained results. It would seem that a low self-monitoring score will not <u>necessarily</u> predict attitude-behavior consistency; nor will a self-report of low cross-situational variability in behavior for a specific attitude <u>necessarily</u> be associated with attitude-behavior convariation. Only those persons who are low self-monitors <u>and</u> who report that they do not vary from one situation to another in how they behave will manifest greater-than-normal

attitude-behavior covariation.

It may be surprising that low self-monitors and low variability subjects do not necessarily behave more consistently with their attitudes than persons high on these dimensions. Why might this be the case? For the self-monitoring dimension, the most likely explanation would seem to be that while low self-monitors may be more consistent on the average than high self-monitors, they may not manifest greater covariation within a specific domain. Such factors as the importance of the attitude and the confidence with which it is held, which might vary with behavior variability, may determine whether low self-monitors actually decide to rely upon their attitudes for making behavioral choices.

But then why is self-reported cross-situational variability in behavior -- clearly specific to one domain -- not necessarily predictive of such covariation? A possible explanation for this apparent contradiction might be that a report of low variability means something different for low and high self-monitors. That is, low and high self-monitors may work from different "baselines" when they judge whether, for a specific attitude-behavior domain, they vary in their behavior across situations. Since low self-monitors generally behave more consistently than high self-monitors, highs may decide "I do not vary across situations" when, from the point of view of lows, there is considerable variability in behavior.

Whatever the explanations for the obtained effects, the results clearly demonstrated that low self-monitors who reported little variability in behavior across situations acted most in accordance with their attitudes. It should be noted that within other attitude-behavior domains, self-monitoring and variability scores may be intercorrelated. Within the religious domain, this study has shown that they are not, and that both dimensions must be taken into account if one is to identify most accurately those individuals who will manifest greatest attitude-behavior covariation. It remains for future research to show whether the dimensions are also independent in other attitude-behavior domains.

## Reference Note

1. Strommen, M. P. Religious beliefs: Powerful predictors of actions and behavior. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C., August 1976.

## References

Bem, D. J., & Allen, A. On predicting some of the people some of the time: The search for cross-situational consistencies in behavior. Psychological Review, 1974, 81, 506-520.

Deutscher, I. Why do they say one thing, do another? Morristown, N.J.: General Learning Press, 1973.

Gergen, M. K., Gergen, K. J., & Morse, S. J. Correlates of marijuana use among college students. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 1972, 2, 1-16.

Mischel, W. Personality and assessment. New York: Wiley, 1968.

Mischel, W. Toward a cognitive social learning reconceptualization of personality. Psychological Review, 1973, 80, 252-283.

Snyder, M. Individual differences and the self-control of expressive behavior (Doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 1972). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1972, 33, 4533A-4534A. (University Microfilms No. 4598.)

Snyder, M. The self-monitoring of expressive behavior. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1974, 30, 526-537.

Snyder, M. Cognitive, behavioral, and interpersonal consequences of self-monitoring. In P. Pliner, K. R. Blankstein, I. M. Spigel, T. Alloway, & L. Krames (Eds.), Advances in the study of communication and affect (Volume 5): Perception of emotion in self and others. New York: Plenum Press, in press.

Snyder, M., & Monson, T. C. Persons, situations, and the control of social behavior. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1975, 32, 637-644.

Snyder, M., & Tanke, E. D. Behavior and attitude: Some people are more consistent than others. Journal of Personality, 1976, 44, 501-517.

Vernon, P. E. Personality assessment: A critical survey. New York: Wiley, 1964.

Wicker, A. W. Attitudes versus actions: The relationship of verbal and overt behavioral responses to attitude objects. Journal of Social Issues, 1969, 25, 41-78.

Wicker, A. W. An examination of the "other variables" explanation of attitude-behavior inconsistency. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1971, 19, 18-30.

**Slide 1**

**Possible Patterns of Attitude-Behavior Consistency**

Self-Reported Variability

| Self-Monitoring | Low | High |
|---|---|---|
| Low | + | + |
| High | + | 0 |

(a)

Self-Reported Variability

| Self-Monitoring | Low | High |
|---|---|---|
| Low | + | 0 |
| High | 0 | 0 |

(b)

Self-Reported Variability

| Self-Monitoring | Low | High |
|---|---|---|
| Low | ++ | + |
| High | + | 0 |

(c)

Self-Reported Variability

| Self-Monitoring | Low | High |
|---|---|---|
| Low | +++ | + |
| High | + | 0 |

(d)

Note. "+"s reflect greater attitude-behavior consistency. A "0" should not be interpreted as a prediction that no attitude-behavior consistency will be manifested by subjects in that cell; rather, it reflects a baseline covariation between the specific attitude and the observed attitude-related behavior (the baseline may be no covariation, or it may be a moderate amount of covariation, depending upon both the attitude and the behavior).

Slide 2

Correlations Between Religious Attitudes and Religious Behaviors

| Behavioral Measure | Overall | Marginal Correlations | | | | Within-Cell Correlations | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-monitoring: | | Low | High | | | Low | Low | High | High |
| Variability: | | | | Low | High | Low | High | Low | High |
| n : | 102 | 44 | 58 | 52 | 50 | 24 | 20 | 28 | 30 |
| (i) Attended services/prayed | .38** | .47** | .30* | .41** | .32 | .53* | .34 | .33 | .31 |
| (ii) Alcohol/ drugs | -.09 | -.41* | .05 | -.39* | .10 | -.61** | -.15 | -.22 | .19 |

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$